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In the claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for use by an access point in a wireless communications environment including multiple access points and stations, wherein stations gain network access by associating with one or more of the access points, comprising the steps of:

collecting bid messages from stations, each bid message being a request from one station to associate with the access point and including at least one parameter;

keeping track of one or more parameters related to stations in the network;

selecting one of the bid messages based at least in-part on the at least one parameter; and

causing the station which submitted the selected bid message a station to become associated with the access point based upon the one or more parameters.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one parameter includes distance from the access point wherein the step of keeping track includes logic for receiving messages from stations, and wherein the messages include at least some of the one or more parameters.

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 2 wherein a parameter is the selecting step is also based at least in-part on the number of stations associated with the access point.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the selecting step includes the further step of selecting the bid message from the closest station in terms of distance parameter is the distance of a station from the access point.

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5. (currently amended) The method of claim 4 wherein ~~the step of causing the station which~~ ~~submitted the selected bid message to become associated with the access point is executed only if~~ ~~a selected maximum number of station associations with the access point has not been exceeded~~ ~~at least some of the one or more parameters are stored in a table~~.

6. (currently amended) A method for use in an access point in a wireless communications environment including multiple access points and stations, wherein stations gain network access by associating with one or more of the access points, comprising the steps of:

collecting bid messages from stations, each bid message being a request from one station to associate with the access point and including at least one parameter;

keeping track of the collected ~~one or more~~ parameters ~~related to stations in the network~~ ~~by receiving messages from stations, wherein the messages include at least some of the one or~~ ~~more parameters~~;

wherein a parameter may be the number of stations associated with the access point, and wherein another parameter may be the distance of a station from the access point;

selecting one of the bid messages based at least in-part on the at least one parameter, and causing a station to become associated with the access point based upon the one or more parameters.